



303-832-DRUG  
Phone-Line  
888-932-5556  
Volunteer Handbook

Mile High Area Service Committee

July 2013

## **Introduction**

The primary Purpose of Narcotics Anonymous is to stay clean and carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers. By far, the best way to make ourselves available to those who need help is to provide a “Help Line” phone service. Someone can call and talk anonymously to a recovering addict 24 hours a day. The suffering addict can call this number without fear, get meeting times, locations and receive information about Narcotics Anonymous. The Help Line’s main goal is to get the addict to a meeting of Narcotics Anonymous.

## **Help Line Basics**

When you answer the phone you will hear the Narcotics Anonymous Help Line computer say:

“There is a call for Communications. If you want to accept the call, please press the number ‘1’. If you are unable to take the call, it will rotate to the next volunteer by not answering.

## **What is the N.A. Program?**

Narcotics Anonymous is a non-profit society, or fellowship of men and women for whom drugs have become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. This is a program of complete abstinence from all drugs. There is only one requirement for membership: the desire to stop using. We suggest that you keep an open mind and give yourself a break. Our program is a set of principles written so simply that we can follow them in our daily lives. The most important thing is that they work

There are no strings attached to N.A. We are not affiliated with any other organizations. We have no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign no promises to make to anyone. We are not connected with any political, religious or law enforcement groups, and are under no surveillance at any time. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race sexual identity, creed, religion or lack of religion.

We are not interested in what or how much you used or who your connections were, what you have done in the past, how much or how little you have, but only in what you want to do about your problem and how we can help. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.

## Volunteer Policies

The suggested requirements for our Help Line volunteers are “that they be active members of Narcotics Anonymous, attend meetings regularly and have one year clean time.” Your prompt and regular availability at the time of your shift is imperative. When speaking to callers, remain objective and non-argumentative. Remember, you are likely to be the first contact a person has with Narcotics Anonymous. A warm, friendly voice will reassure a frightened, uneasy person in need of help. Always respect the confidential aspects of your role as Helpline volunteer. If you are answering a call, be certain the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or a member of Narcotics Anonymous.

**Remember, we do not endorse or make recommendations about any other programs or agencies.** If another program is part of your experience, strength and hope, be sure the caller understands that no outside program is affiliated with, or recommended by, Narcotics Anonymous. If the caller insists on information about treatment facilities, suggest they look in the ‘Yellow Pages’ under Drug Abuse. Try to keep calls brief, because it is important to keep the Helpline open to others in need. You may suggest to call back for further information. **Do not** give the caller your home phone number. PRESS \*67 to block your number before call back

**Never give names or phone numbers to other Helpline volunteers or any members of Narcotics Anonymous.** If you get a call from someone looking for an Area Officer or Sub-Committee Chairperson, get the caller’s name and phone number and contact that requested person yourself.

**Don’t harbor any doubts or frustrations about your position as a Helpline volunteer. If you run into any problems or have questions, call the Helpline Coordinator.** Make sure the information you give is accurate and up-to-date. Take time to check current schedules and new information. It is better to give NO information than wrong information.

**It is the Helpline volunteer’s responsibility to keep current meeting directories on hand.** You could get Narcotics Anonymous “business” related calls. Someone wanting to start a meeting, have schedules sent to them, a one-time speaking engagement, a treatment facility wanting to start a meeting, etc. **Do not attempt to help these callers yourself. Get their name and phone number, and pass that information on to the appropriate Sub-Committee Chair.** Get as much information as you can about what they want. Let them know you will be passing on their name and number to the person responsible for that job. Relay the message to the correct person as soon as possible. Leave your name and phone number if you leave a message with an answering machine or another person.

**Request confirmation that your message has been received.**

## **Misconceptions**

Narcotics Anonymous does not operate Detox units, recovery or halfway houses and is not affiliated with such facilities in any way.

Narcotics Anonymous does not crusade, solicit or advertise for members to join us.

Narcotics Anonymous does not engage in/or sponsor research.

Narcotics Anonymous does not keep membership records or case histories.

Narcotics Anonymous does not follow-up on members or in any way try to control them.

Narcotics Anonymous does not make medical or psychological diagnoses, and does not provide marriage, family or vocational counseling.

Narcotics Anonymous does not provide welfare, counseling or other social services.

Narcotics Anonymous does not conduct religious services of any kind.

Narcotics Anonymous does not accept money for its service, is not funded by public or private sources and accepts no contributions from non-members.

## **Do's**

- When you are answering/returning a call, be certain that the person requesting help is on the line before identifying yourself as an addict or mentioning Narcotics Anonymous.
- Always identify yourself with "this is the helpline" only and state that you are an addict.
- Always have the necessary materials (e.g., handbook, meeting list, white booklet, NA pamphlets) close to the telephone, to avoid delay and confusion.
- Find out what the caller needs. Ask questions.
- Remember to be helpful and polite to all callers.
- Make appropriate referrals when necessary.

If you receive any crisis calls during your shift i.e. OD/Suicide/Violence get the number if possible and call 911 anonymously, if other problems arise please call the Phone Coordinator.

## **Don'ts**

- Don't argue with people whose views of addiction differ from yours or NA's. If the caller does not want to stop using, do not try to persuade him/her to stop.
- Don't try to handle calls that you are not qualified to answer.
- Don't give medical advice.
- Don't give out other people's names or telephone numbers.
- Don't answer questions about who was at an NA meeting (e.g., to police officers, probation officers, or significant others). However, general information may be given about NA's make-up (variance in size of meeting, NA open to all age groups, etc.)
- Don't glorify active addiction by telling war stories.
- Don't ever, ever put yourself at risk by picking up or meeting a newcomer alone in the event you choose to meet a newcomer, always bring another recovering addict with you & meet in a neutral, public location. Please treat this like a 12<sup>th</sup> Step call.

## **Common Phone line Calls**

The following section illustrates several types of calls commonly received by phone line volunteers. These outlines are not meant to be a script for phone line calls. Instead, they are offered as examples of appropriate responses in various situations. On the following pages, possible responses appear in *Italics*. Remember that we carry the message of recovery to the caller when we express that:

1. Our primary objective is to get the addict to a meeting
2. The program works
3. We were once suffering ourselves
4. We care and are willing to help

Our tone of voice and delivery speed is just as important as the words we use. We acknowledge what the caller is saying and feeling. Do not use judgmental words or preach to the caller. It is important to keep in mind that calls may not follow exactly the dialogue detailed in this section. However, familiarity with this information will make it easier to respond appropriately and to serve within the spirit of the Twelve Traditions of NA.

### **Fellowship Matter/Request for Information**

Give a brief description of NA to callers requesting presentations, special meetings, literature, activities, etc.

### **Personal Calls**

If the caller wants to meet with or talk to a specific individual in NA, politely tell them, *“It is our policy that we cannot accept personal messages, and I cannot give out the telephone number of anyone who may or may not be in the fellowship.”* Keep in mind that the anonymity of our members is very important, and we must **never** acknowledge anyone’s membership in our fellowship, either directly or indirectly.

## **Talking to a Friend or Family Member**

### **Crisis Calls**

Although most of the calls taken by the phone line volunteer are routine in nature, occasionally a crisis call may arise. Always take these calls seriously. When the volunteer has established that a caller is in crisis, the volunteer can quickly refer the caller to the appropriate telephone number from the Community Service Referral List (included in packet). Make sure the person writes the number down, then say, *“When the crisis passes, give **our** telephone number to your loved one and suggest he/she call NA to hear about recovery from drug addiction.”*

Get the number if possible in the case of an OD/Suicide/Violence and call 911 anonymously.

## **Does the Addict Want Help?**

Find out if the addict wants to stop using. If the answer is yes, and he/she would like to hear about recovery from drug addiction, talk to them (see the “Talking to an Addict” Section).

If the addict doesn’t want to stop using or come to the telephone, tell the caller, *“We cannot do anything for your loved one until they want to stop using – the addict must want help. There are, however, programs for loved ones of addicts. I can tell you how to get information if you would like.”*

NOTE: Always explain briefly the principle of our Sixth Tradition: *“Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with, nor recommends any other organization, institution, emergency service, agency or program. We simply provide alternate telephone Numbers to callers who need services other than NA.”* Answer questions about NA politely, but don’t tie up the telephone for long. *“We need to clear the line now in case an addict is trying to call us. Feel free to attend an open meeting if you would like to find out more about NA. Your loved one may wish to attend with you”.*

NOTE: For additional information, refer to the “How to Handle Special Calls” section.

## **Talking to an Addict**

Listen and respond to the caller. A suffering addict probably will indicate that he/she wants information or wants help.

### **Addict Wants Information About NA**

Answer the caller’s questions. If you sense that the caller wants more, ask, *“Do you have any more questions about Narcotics Anonymous?”* After the caller has asked all of his/her questions, and if you sense that the caller wants to continue the conversation, then respond, *“It sounds like you are really hurting. I know the desperation that you must be feeling. Do you want help to quit using drugs?”* The addict will indicate if he/she wants help.

### **Addict Interested – May Be Ready for Help: NO**

Conclude the call by saying, *“When you are ready, we are here to help you. Our program works for those who want to quit using. Always remember that there is a way out.”*

### **Addict Interested – May Be Ready for Help: YES**

If the caller wants help that is beyond the scope of services that NA can provide (e.g., detox, treatment information, etc.), furnish one or more telephone numbers from the Community Service Referral List (included in packet). Be familiar with the “How to Handle Special Calls” section. Do not hang up until you are fairly sure you have done all you can for this caller. If it is not a crisis call, listen to the caller and express your concern.

### **Addict Wants to Stop Using or Is Not Sure**

Respond empathetically. Share a little about what it was like, what happened, and what it is like today. You might sum it up by saying, *“There was a time in my life that I thought I’d never be able to quit using drugs. However, since I found NA, I haven’t had to use. Would you like to go to an NA meeting?”* (If yes, see next section. If no, see No above).

### **Refer Addict to a Meeting**

Give the caller information (time, location and directions, if needed) about the next available meeting. Take a few moments and explain to the caller what he/she can expect at a meeting. Included the structure/format of the meeting (e.g., speaker, topic, discussion, Basic Text study, etc.). It is helpful to go into some detail to make them feel as comfortable as possible. Conclude the call by saying, *“To get the most out of the meeting, try to get there a few minutes early. If you need further help, give us a call again. You’ve done the right thing by calling us. I will/won’t be at that meeting. I’m looking forward to meeting you.”*

## **Addict Won't Go to a Meeting**

Ask them, "*Why not?*" The following are examples of ways to respond to excuses for not going to a meeting. The addict's questions and statements may sound like he/she is not ready yet, but remember that the caller has already expressed that he/she needs help. Our intention is to help the caller **focus on the solutions**, rather than the problems keeping him/her from attending NA meetings.

If the caller is **on guard**, "What happens at a meeting?" respond, "*We are a group of clean addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. Addicts share about what it was like and what life is like today. You aren't required to do or say anything.*"

If the caller **presents obstacles**, "My car doesn't work, etc." respond, "*Does this problem have a solution?*"

If the caller uses his/her **children as an excuse**, "I don't have anyone to take care of my children," respond, "*If you have to, you can bring them to an open meeting. If they are school age, you can attend daytime meetings.*"

If the caller says they are **too scared**, respond, "*You're not alone. During my first meeting, I felt so self-conscious I was afraid to say anything. You don't need to worry, we're all pretty friendly.*" Try to arrange for someone to meet them at the meeting.

If the caller says he/she is **still using**, "I can't stay clean long enough to go to a meeting." Respond, "*If you want to stop using, then you are welcome. We ask that you not have any drugs or paraphernalia with you during the meeting.*"

If the caller says they are **too hopeless**, "It won't work for me. I'm too far-gone." Respond, "*I felt that way too; however, with the help of NA, I have a choice. I don't have to use today.*"

If the caller has **other excuses**, "I can't go because: I have family or work obligations; my wife/husband doesn't approve; etc." respond, "*It sounds like if you don't get help, you may not be able to keep your job, family, etc.*"

After discussing the caller's reasons for not going to a meeting and some possible solutions, ask the caller, "*Do you want to go to a meeting?*" For a response, refer to the appropriate heading within this section.

## **How to Handle Special Calls**

**A Narcotics Anonymous phone line is strictly for dispensing information about the NA Fellowship, NA meetings and recovery.** A volunteer must always remember that he/she is only a recovering addict sharing their experience, strength, and hope. As volunteers, we are not professional crisis counselors, doctors, or psychologists, etc., and **we do not have the right to give professional advice**. Callers with issues that, in the volunteer's opinion, are beyond the boundaries of Narcotics Anonymous should be quickly and politely given an appropriate referral number from the Community Service Referral List (included in packet).

Before providing any other referral number, always explain that Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with, not recommends, any other organizations, institutions, emergency services, agencies, or programs. We simply provide alternate telephone numbers for those callers who need services other than NA.

## **Overdose**

**Probable or Possible:** If the caller has overdosed, **First** try to get them to call 911. If you remain calm it will have a helpful affect on your caller. Do what you can in situations like this.

**Under no circumstances should you give medical advice.**

**Please Remember, as a phone line volunteer, our primary objective is to direct the potential newcomer to an NA meeting or direct questions about our fellowship to the appropriate subcommittee.**



The 832-DRUG line is not meant to be a community referral line.

There are plenty of other numbers to be found in the phonebook under the listings of Drug and Alcohol Abuse. However, if we are asked, we may provide callers with alternative phone numbers.

**When providing these numbers, always explain that Narcotics Anonymous is not affiliated with, nor does it recommend, any other organizations, institutions, emergency services, agencies or programs.**

In the spirit of cooperation we simply provide alternate telephone numbers for those callers who need services other than what Narcotics Anonymous can provide.

## Referral Numbers

### EMERGENCIES.....911

Denver Metro suicide and Crisis Hot Line.....303-860-1222  
Poison Control.....303-739-1123  
Office of Behavioral Health.....303-866-7400

### Mile High Council on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse and Mental Health

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Information & referral line.....303-825-8113  
Info & referral/24-hour toll-free number.....800-537-8098  
Arapahoe House.....303-657-3700

#### Medical Referral Lines

Denver Health Nurse line.....303-739-1211  
St. Anthony's, ask for a nurse..... 303-777-6877

#### Homeless Shelters

Colorado coalition of the Homeless.....303-293-2217  
Salvation Army.....303-295-3366  
Samaritan House.....303-294-0241  
Volunteers of America.....303-297-0408  
Denver Inner City Parish.....303-629-0636

#### Naranon

Naranon..... 303-665-2271  
Naranon National help line.....800-477-6291

#### Physical Abuse/Shelter

Alternatives to Family Violence.....303-289-4441

### Spanish Speaking ( and English) Drug/Alcohol Info & Domestic Violence

Crisis Support Line.....800-784-2433  
United Way.....211

#### RTD bus info

RTD (bus service, Metro Denver)..... 303-299-6000

Nation Wide Teleconference meeting list - [WWW.NAPHONE.ORG](http://WWW.NAPHONE.ORG)  
Narcotics Anonymous website - [WWW.NADENVER.ORG](http://WWW.NADENVER.ORG)  
Narcotics Anonymous regional website- [WWW.NACOLORADO.ORG](http://WWW.NACOLORADO.ORG)  
Narcotics Anonymous world website- [WWW.NA.ORG](http://WWW.NA.ORG)

Updated: 6/27/13

## **The Twelve Steps of Narcotics Anonymous**

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## **The Twelve Traditions of Narcotics Anonymous**

1. Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends on NA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop using.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.
5. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or NA as a whole.
6. An NA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the NA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every NA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Narcotics anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. NA, as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Narcotics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the NA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion, we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and film.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to principles before personalities.